Chronicles and Letters

Irmão X

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First Part

CHRONICLES AND LETTERS

DEDICATION

Rabindranath Tagore shares an allegory in which a farmer, returning home with his harvest, sees a magnificent, star-adorned carriage approaching. The carriage stops, and the farmer, surprised, recognizes the Lord of the World, who steps out and asks for alms.

Astonished, the farmer wonders why the Lord of Life would ask him, a humble laborer, for help.

Although moved and speechless, he plunged his hand into the sack of wheat he carried and offered the Divine Beggar only one grain of the precious cargo.

The Lord thanked him and departed.

When, however, the poor farmer recovered from his astonishment, he observed that a sweet light was emanating from the dusty sack. The grain of wheat, from which he had made his gift, had returned to the bag, and transformed into a luminescent gold nugget.

Dazzled, he shouted:

- How foolish I was! Why didn't I give everything I had to the Sovereign of Life?

*

In today's world, when materialism compromises venerable edifices of faith in the path of men, we know that Christ asks for cooperation in sowing the seeds of the Revived Gospel that the Spiritist Doctrine conveys.

By delivering this humble book to the circulation of renewing ideas – an unpretentious work that is not worth a grain of wheat of the Truth – I imagine in these letters and chronicles, which I pass on

to the hands of my dear reader, a handful of firelighters for the fire of the New Revelation, and I repeat, reverently, before the goodness of the Eternal Friend:

- Ah! Lord! I understand the meaning of Your appeals and the greatness of Your magnificence, but forgive me, Your little servant, if I have nothing else to give You!

Irmão X

Uberaba, April 18, 1966

I
THE INFLUENCE OF GOODNESS

You say that Spiritists exaggerate the themes of charity, publishing books, writing chronicles, giving lectures, and taking notes on this sublime virtue.

“Isn't social assistance the government's job?” You ask with the serenity of someone who considers himself exempt from helping the fire department put out a fire. And you add: "I believe that discarnate spirits, in the name of charity, should not encourage laziness and vagrancy."

I cannot say that you speak this way because you are a man born into a comfortable home, with all the advantages of bread and education, and I fully agree with your opinion that we should expect administrative action to solve the problems of ignorance and poverty.

However, what swimmer will not extend a helping hand to a bather, who the rough sea threatens with death, simply because the lifeguard is busy or distracted at the lifeguard station?

Furthermore, charity is an ingredient of peace in all environments of existence, not only relieving the suffering or lifting up the fallen, but also thwarting crimes and averting misfortunes.

Certainly, justice is the foundation of the Universe; however, love is the soul of life. How many enigmas of hatred are solved in a gesture of gentleness? How many tons of shadows, segregated in the barrel of suffering, flow out through the crack opened by a ray of light?

I understand that you, reincarnated as you are, will have difficulty understanding the obstacles that kindness dissolves in silence, but, on this other side of earthly experience, we are confronted, hour by hour, by living lessons that invite us to serve and think.

Work, hardship, and challenges strengthen the soul, but charity offers immediate renewal and hope. The Talmud teaches that two apprentices of Rabbi Hanina consistently refused to accept any warnings or predictions from soothsayers.

One day, while entering the forest to gather firewood, they encountered an old clairvoyant who saw, around them, a vast cohort of disembodied evildoers, eager to persecute and kill them.

The wizard, so as not to frighten them too much with the details of his vision, gazed at the stars as if seeking in the heavens the words he would utter, and asked them to consider the risks they were exposing themselves to.

He advised them to return home urgently. Gloomy predictions weighed heavily on them as they marched on. It was more reasonable to return to the comfort of home, since they would probably not come out of the forest alive.

The young people laughed at the warning and continued on their way.

Having traveled a short stretch of road, they were confronted by an old man who begged them for some means to satisfy his hunger.

The boys carried no other provisions than a piece of bread; however, they did not hesitate to share it with the beggar, who right there, begged God to repay their kindness.

The makeshift woodcutters, paying little attention to the incident, gathered the kindling they needed and returned to the village without the slightest setback to tarnish their joy.

A certain man, however, who had observed the prediction and awaited the results, approached the clairvoyant, asking ironically…

- You trickster, how do you explain your mistake? The young men returned happier than ever.

The old man, intrigued, sought out the boys and, noticing they were free from the obsessors who had been accompanying them, asked permission to examine the bundles they carried. By untying the bundles of wood shavings, a dead snake was found in one of them, cut in half.

- Did you see? – said the magician – death was about to overwhelm you… The blow, however, was averted. What did you do to deserve the Divine Mercy that saved you from fatal disaster?
One of those questioned informed that the only episode he remembered was simply the encounter with a starving old man with whom the two had shared their lunch.

The soothsayer showed undisguised joy and spoke to the man who had criticized him:
- Everything is clear now! What can be done if God's law is influenced by a piece of bread?

*

You will forgive me if I refer to ancient Hebrew documents to respond to your letter. However, if the simple story tells us of the merits of a piece of bread given with love before the Divine Laws, imagine the joy that will reign among us when we know how to create happiness for our fellow men, committing our whole hearts to brotherhood.

2

CURIOUS EXPERIENCE

João Massena was extremely dedicated to the sick. After his disincarnation, he led a group of companions in a large city for a few years.

He worked hard to spread the liberating ideas of Spiritism. Respected and loved by those who received his help, he expanded his influence. People called on him with affection in many places. He offered valuable services and gained cooperation and sympathy.

Massena used the Gospel wisely. He supported the unfortunate, protected the desperate, and guided several disembodied doctors to help patients, focusing on obsessive processes.

Massena supported his group of incarnated friends, and they supported him. Their mutual understanding and collaboration led to constant wonders.

The tasks continued encouraging when a certain distressing case arose for João.

A young woman destined for important mediumistic endeavors lay at home, locked between four walls and watched over by impossible Spirits, interested in collecting some debts from her guilty past. Benefactors of the Higher Life supported her; persecutors plotted her downfall.

Prestigious in the eyes of the Higher powers, Massena studied the best way to awaken her to the responsibilities with which she was invested and realized that, for this, it would suffice for someone capable of stimulating her memory to return to equilibrium, someone who spoke to her with respect to reasoned faith, logical belief, the immortality of the soul, and spiritual life.

The young woman, however, under the trial of wealth, suffered the disadvantage of not needing to leave the narrow confines of her home and, in the face of this, found it more difficult to let go of herself.

Little by little, dominated by vampiric entities, she surrendered to

the vice of alcohol and, almost annihilated as her resistance was, allowed these same disturbed creatures to whisper to her the suggestion of a crime to be perpetrated against a close relative.

Although she reacted, the poor girl was almost succumbing to insanity, to delinquency.

João, distressed, recognized the alarming state. The girl, however, refrained from leaving the house, receiving visitors, or engaging in reading, and she disregarded the efficacy of prayer.

Mentally intoxicated, she was taking a sinister path when Massena discovered something. The unfortunate girl liked television, which had become her only means of contact with the outside world. Why not help her through such a resource?

The selfless spiritual friend set out to work, distributing mental appeals in various sectors managed to coordinate provisions until a friend accepted his inspiration and came to the group with an enthusiastic project.

This “enthusiastic project” was nothing other than Massena’s interest in saving the young woman. And the visitor, under his influence, became vehement in the tranquil cenacle, inviting the group to take advantage of an opportunity he had obtained through a certain channel.

He had secured twenty minutes for a spiritist topic on a respectable television station.

The group would be represented by some of its most distinguished members on four days, a Friday at ten o'clock at night, to discuss minor aspects of mediumship and Spiritist Doctrine. The offeror, after signs of jubilant optimism, concluded by explaining that he needed urgent adjustments. He wanted, immediately, the name of the colleague who was determined to speak, before attending to instructions from authorities and establishing details.

The nine colleagues gathered there, however, were not in tune with that wave of fervent expectation.

Lara, the director with the greatest responsibility, considered:

Spiritism does not require television, as we already have our teaching centers However, I leave this decision to the discretion of our colleagues.

The newcomer, speaking for himself and for the spiritual benefactor who enveloped him in thoughts of hope, retorted:
- Undoubtedly, the Spiritist temple is the home of doctrinal word, but that doesn't prevent us from commenting on Spiritist principles, for the benefit of Humanity, whether on the radio or in the press, in the street or in the salon. If we were to speak about good only in the instincts of religious faith, we would leave evil a terrible free field ...

The judicious suggestion, however, did not take hold.

Delcides, the team's intelligent commentator, added:

- I'm against it. I wouldn't go on television, not at all. I consider it pure vanity.

Antônio Pinho, a competent speaker, agreed:

- For my part, I don't have the courage to engage in such a display...

Meira, with his confident speech and firm vision, commented dryly:

- Neither me.

And the other five added:
- Going on television to talk about Spiritism is definitely not right...

- I think the same way. Those who wish to learn Spiritist Doctrine are invited to attend the meetings...

- I couldn't agree either ...

- I'm not interested in theater ...

- That's out of the question...

The negotiation ended, and the proposer left, disappointed.

Curious, we visited the young woman who was obsessed, on the date Massena had predicted would bring her help. At ten o'clock that Friday night, we found her sitting in front of the TV. When we arrived, instead of finding the expected discussion on

Spiritism, the minutes were being used for a festive program praising whiskey. Perplexed, we stared at the friendly smile of the television actress who invited us:
'Drink the new brand!' Delicious!

3

CIRCUS TRAGEDY

That night, in the distant year of 177, the “Concilium” of Lyon was overflowing with people.

It was not one of the traditional assemblies of Gaul, held at the altar of the emperor; instead of the usual grand ceremony, the people were closely packed together.

At this time, Marcus Aurelius reigned piously. Although he had not issued any new rescript that would worsen the situation for Christians, he permitted all existing laws against them to be enforced in the city with the utmost rigor.

The killing, therefore, continued, terrible.

No one examined needs or conditions. Women and children, the elderly and the sick, as well as uncapable men and prestigious figures who declared themselves faithful to the Nazarene, were arrested, tortured, and summarily eliminated.

Through the thick houses, upstream from the confluence of the Rhône and the Saône, arrests multiplied, and at the foot of the slope, later known as Fourvière hill, a large circus was improvised, with high palisades around a huge arena.

Representative figures from the Lyonese world were sacrificed in their homes or brutally beaten in the fields, sending the less fortunate, including a large number of slaves, to public rejoicing.

The beasts now seemed numb after slaughtering thousands of victims in their bloody jaws. Because of this, new torments were invented.

Unconscious executioners devised strange tortures.

Cultured ladies and naive girls were disrespected before their heads were cut off, defenseless elders were whipped to death. Boys were separated from their families and sold to merchants in transit

to serve as domestic servants in distant provinces, and noble lords were murdered in their own vineyards. More than twenty thousand people had already been killed.

*

That night, which we referred to above, the arrival of Lucius Gallus, a famous war leader who enjoyed the Emperor's special favor for distinguishing himself against the usurpation of General Avidius Cassius, now inclined to a well-deserved rest, was announced for the following day.

Fair celebrations were immediately planned.

For this reason, while outside gladiators and minstrels jostled each other, the patrician Alcius Plancus, who claimed to be a descendant of the city's founder, presided over the meeting at the request of the Propretor, planning the festivities.

"Besides the greetings, in front of the chariots that will arrive from Vienna," he said, somewhat affected by the abundant wine, "the circus must give us some exceptional scene... The wrestler Septimius could gather the best men; however, it would not be enough to renew the roster of athletes..."

- The dance troupe has never been better – ventured Gaius Marcellinus, a former legionary from Britain who had become rich through plunder.

- Yes, yes... – agreed Alcius – we will instruct Musonia so that the dances remain up to par...

- We will arrange a gathering of aurochs – reminded Persius Niger.

- Aurochs! Aurochs!... – cried the crowd in approval.

- Excellent idea! – said Plancus in a louder voice – but, in consideration of the visitor, it is imperative to add some novelty that Rome does not know...

A terrible cry arose from the assembly:

"Christians to the beasts! Christians to the beasts!"

When the clamor subsided, the head of the council replied:

"This is nothing new! And there are unfavorable circumstances. The lions recently arrived from Africa are lazy..."

He smiled maliciously and snapped:

- Of course, in recent days, they have been surprised by temptations and delicacies that even Lucullus himself never encountered in the comfort of his own home...

After general laughter, Alcius continued, ironically:

- I heard, however, from some companions, even today, and we will present a plan that I hope will work. We could gather tonight, approximately one thousand Christian children and women, keeping them in the prisons...

And, tomorrow, crowning the festivities, we will gather them in the arena, soaked in resin and properly surrounded by barbs soaked in oil, leaving only a narrow passage for the release of the strongest. After they have been festively displayed in public, we will set the whole area on fire, throwing upon it the old horses that are no longer useful for our games...

Truly, the flames and the hooves of the animals will create many unprecedented spectacles...

- Very good! Very good! – shouted the crowd, from one end of the atrium to the other.

- Time is of the essence – shouted Plancus – and we need everyone's help... We don't have enough guards.

And raising his voice even higher:
- Raise your right hand if you are willing to cooperate.

Hundreds of bystanders, including robust women, raised their right hands in applause, their faces beaming.

Encouraged by the general enthusiasm and wishing to distribute the task among all the volunteers, the leader of the night announced, sarcastically and inflexibly:

Let each of us bring one... These plagues lie hidden everywhere... Hunting them down and exterminating them is the task for now...

Throughout the night, more than a thousand people, eager for cruelty, searched humble dwellings and, the following day, in the bright afternoon sun, long lines of women and little children, screaming and crying, at the end of a magnificent spectacle, met their death, burned in the flames fanned by the wind, or torn apart by galloping horses.

*

Almost eighteen centuries have passed since that dark event...

However, the justice of Law, through reincarnation, brought together all those responsible, who, in various physical ages, reunited for painful atonement on December 17, 1961, in the Brazilian city of Niterói, in a moving tragedy at a circus.

4

LOVE AND SUPPORT

The discussion centered on spiritual protection, guided by Jonaquim, a respected mentor known for his wisdom in Christian communication.

Jonaquim shared that Mardônio Tércio, an early Christian convert in Rome, embodied humility and dedication so profoundly that he became blessed in Heaven, exemplifying spiritual protection through faith.

A patrician of enormous fortune, abandoned at an early age by his wife, who had left for Carthage to live an independent life, Mardônio, as soon as he understood the essence of Christ's doctrine, divided all his possessions with his only son, Marcos Lício, and devoted himself to charity and renewal.

A faithful instrument of good, he opened his ears to all edifying appeals, whether from the messengers of Jesus who asked him to perform meritorious tasks, or from his brothers incarnated in the lowest rungs of poverty.

He spontaneously became the support of helpless widows and the affectionate guardian of orphans. In addition, he set aside time each day for direct service, assisting the sick and suffering by administering food and aid with his own hands.

Unlike his father, young Marcos wallowed in absurd addiction. At thirty years old, he seemed like a walking scourge.

Distinguishing himself between the forces of gold and power, he did not hesitate to abuse the privileges he enjoyed to maintain himself in the gilded banditry that social privileges so often keep unpunished.

Two such different paths consequently produced two diametrically opposed positions in the Spiritual World. Upon death, Mardonius grew in such merit that he was elevated to the sphere of Christ, accessible to servants who could collaborate with him, the Lord, in the most tormented days of the nascent Gospel.

Marcos, however, threw himself into the dark den of lower zones, where, although prone to revolt and perversion, his conscience was as if covered by a thick carapace of insensitivity.

The father, converted into an apostle of self-denial, visited his son in the dark valley where he had fallen, without the latter, blind in spirit, noticing his presence.

He felt such compassion for the one with whom he had shared affection and blood that, at one point, in a burst of passionate love for his beloved offspring, he begged the Lord for permission to take him with him to the Heavens, in order to assist him more closely.

Jesus smiled understandingly and acquiesced in the face of the naive tenderness of the devoted cooperator, and, before experienced friends could warn him, Mardônio went to the dark cave where his son was intoxicated with madness and illusion...

Working closely with Marcos, positively distant from any notion of responsibility, he applied magnetic passes to him, anesthetizing his senses, and as soon as the beneficiary yielded to rest, he tenderly placed him on his shoulders, like a precious cargo, and with immense care, transported him to Heaven...

Installed in one of the simplest places on the Upper Plane, the newcomer, however, enjoyed light more radiant than that of Earth, and as soon as he awoke under his father's enchantment, he found himself covered in repulsive fluids that gave him the impression of being a patient caked in encrusted mud. Marcos confronted those around him, who moved in tenuous and luminous bodies, and began to shout expletives and insults.

He tried to slap his father, who attempted to comfort him, mercilessly, stating that he had not asked for or desired the change. Exhorted to respect the name and house of the Lord, he reviled the environment with words and ideas of mockery and ingratitude. He looked like an untethered beast, seeking to muddy a source of light.

Friends intervened, and the rebel fell back into prostration, under beneficial hypnosis... Jonaquim paused again, and because he had interrupted at the climax of the story, one of his companions interrupted: “So what? Was Mardônio prevented from supporting the son he loved?” The instructor explained:

- Yes, my friends, Mardônio finally understood that God does not harm any child in the name of good, and that good never escapes patience in order to help...

Therefore, he took Marcos back to the den from which he had rescued him and, without losing any tenderness or hope, until his son wanted to leave there to take new steps on the path of evolution.

The former patrician, for ninety-two consecutive years, descended daily into the valley of darkness, offering his son, each time, the blessing of a prayer, an enlightening phrase and a piece of bread.

“But isn't that the same as emphasizing the impracticality of help?” ventured one of those present. "Wouldn't it be fairer to relegate the needy to their own destiny so that they could think about themselves?"

Jonaquim smiled expressively and concluded:
"We have no right to question the power and efficiency of the assistance law. The renewal achieved through ninety-two years of devotion would perhaps have taken, without them, ninety-two centuries.

Love, in order to help, learns to repeat.

5

SERVICE AND TIME

Mrs. Juvercina Trajano was a prodigy of minutiae. At nearly sixty, she reaffirmed her mission as a devoted Christian, offering children valuable guidance.

A fervent Spiritist, she knew she had reincarnated to perform a great task. It was her duty to help unprotected children. She foresaw the immense work ahead and imagined herself surrounded by little ones begging her for tenderness.

She was moved when recounting her memories of her life as a Spirit before birth. Mrs. Juvercina could remember the time in the Spiritual Plane, preparing for physical existence. There, she considered herself qualified for the great undertaking.

She was in the company of several discarnate benefactors. They would visit welfare institutions in lower areas and note dozens of Spirits, positively disoriented and inferior. She would provide efficient assistance to them after being reinstalled on Earth. And Mrs. Trajano explained this over and over again to her admiring friends.

I see the dark and strange place again, as if it were happening now... A vast valley, full of tormented souls, needing to return to the experience of the world, like students anxiously awaiting the benefits of school. Believe me, I can still hear the voice of the paternal instructor who told me he was Brother Ambrose, speaking to me confidently:
- "Yes, my sister, you will be reborn on Earth with the mission of sponsoring abandoned, suffering children... From this corner of learning, eighty misguided Spirits, but thirsting for enlightenment and love, will depart to meet your embrace...

You will organize a regenerative home for them. You will not lack the resources to place them in the right environment. Return to Earth and work...

Understand that to ensure the foundations of your work, you will bear the responsibility for the readjustment of eighty of our brothers and sisters, disoriented and ill, who will take on a physical body

after you for the restorative effort... They will follow, little by little, under our vigilance, towards your affection!"

Mrs. Trajano strung together reminiscences, somewhere between enthusiastic and moved. And, indeed, since the age of thirty-two, she had successfully begun building a home for the offspring of misfortune.

The undertaking, launched by her on fertile ground, had found the best reception. Noble hearts had arrived, placing in her hands the essential resources. Facilities, offers, money, and cooperation.

In five years, a vast dwelling was built, simple without poverty and comfortable without excess. Juvercina, however, had become demanding and, therefore, although the house appeared dignified and ready, she continued to discover details that she considered of special importance.

She never felt comfortable enough to house the dozens of unfortunate children who knocked on her door. After the building was finished, she wanted to expand it. After making numerous additions, she claimed more land. Once the land was purchased, she decided to plant orchards. Campaigns, projects, appeals, and donations multiplied. But she didn't stop there.

She made multiple decisions to change the lighting, the water system, the wall, ceiling, and floor structures. After deciding to experiment with various seeds in vegetable gardens, she was dissatisfied with the results.

Balconies, pergolas, sheds, and whimsical sidewalks were requested by her when all indications pointed to the inauguration. If the work did not change on the inside, there were new developments on the outside, and twenty-six years passed.

All this time unfolded in many details, when, at the weekly mediumistic meeting of which she was a solicitous companion, Brother Ambrósio himself appeared through one of the psychophonic mediums.

Sharing the surprise of those around her, Mrs. Juvercina cried, overcome with emotion. That voice... She knew that voice...

The messenger urged her to fulfill her promise and explained, with

elegance and beauty, the needs of childhood in the stage of earthly reincarnation.

Juvercina listened and listened, but, realizing that the instructor's words contained a significant warning for her, she asked respectfully, as the communicator was about to take his leave:

- Brother Ambrose, am I not being true to myself? Do you admit that I remain faithful to the obligations I have embraced?

The interlocutor fixed an unforgettable gesture of gentleness and replied with the kindness of a father advising a daughter:
- Yes, my sister, you have been very precise in the program outlined, you have dedicated and suffered for the work, but do not forget the time... The hours are precious loans!

And he added, to everyone's astonishment:
"Thirty spirits in need of guidance and assistance, out of the eighty you committed to help and re-educate, are now delinquents again...

Two are dangerous obsessed on the public highway, six are registered as mentally ill in penitentiaries, and the remaining twenty-two are incarcerated in various jails.

6

PEACEFUL OBSESSION

After the affectionate outpouring of companions who had been separated for an extended time, the conversation naturally transitioned to observations regarding the new situation when I reconnected with my friend Custódio Saquarema in the Spirit World.

I knew Custódio belonged to the Spiritist family and, certainly, in that condition, he would have taken maximum advantage of the existence he had just left. Thinking about this, I ventured a question, hoping to find out that he had excellent baggage for entering higher realms.

Saquarema, however, smiled vaguely and informed me with the subtle self-criticism that I knew him to have in the world:
- Well, my dear, you don't understand what a disguised obsession is, without any outward sign. Earth returned me here, on the old basis of "You have obtained it, but you won't receive it." I accumulated a lot of respect and money; however, I returned much poorer than when I left, on the path of reincarnation...

Realizing that I was not about to interrupt him, he continued:

- You are aware that I was reborn into a Spiritist home, but, as happens to most reincarnated beings, I brought with me, bound to my psychic environment, some partners in vices and extravagances from the past without the vehicle of flesh.

They used me to connect themselves to the sensations of the earthly plane, as if I were an animal, able to cooperate in feeding and guiding a small family...

Believe me, I had resumed the physical plow, carrying an excellent work program that, if followed, would assure me a precious advance to the vanguard of light. However, my vampirizers, cunning and intelligent, acted surreptitiously, without me even slightly sensing their influence... And do you know how?

- ?...

- Through simple, intimate considerations – Saquarema continued, disappointed. – As soon as I left adolescence, with a good dose of logical reasoning in my head, my friendly instructors, on behalf of

my parents, urged me to cultivate the realm of the spirit, referring to study, self-denial, self-improvement.

Yet, within me, the voices of my companions arose from my mind, like streams of water flowing from a spring, giving me the false idea that I was talking to myself; “Things of the soul, Custódio? Not at all. Your time is for youth, joy, sunshine... Leave philosophy for later...”

Some time passed, and I graduated. The warnings from home grew louder, urging me to duty; However, my followers, until then invisible to me, also retaliated with inarticulate mockery: “Now? It’s not an opportune time. How can you reconcile a budding career with matters of religion? Custódio, Custódio!... Observe the majority's criteria, don't play the fool!”

I got married and, soon after, the calls for spiritual growth intensified around me. My shrewd explorers, however, commented, lively: “Don't give in, Custódio!”

And what about family responsibilities? "It is necessary to work, earn money, obtain a position, take care of wife and children..." Death took my parents from me, and I, a lawyer and financier, already in my mature years, still heard the Good Spirits, through dedicated companions, requiring me to moral elevation through the fulfillment of the commitments undertaken.

Nevertheless, in the inner house perched the arguments of my inflexible obsessors: "Custódio, you have more to do... social life... You are not prepared for the field of faith..."

Then, my friend, old age and illness arrived, those two nurses of the soul, who live hand in hand on Earth. I began to suffer and become disillusioned. Some rare visitors of my old age, transmitting to me the last invitations of Higher Spirituality, insisted with me, hoping that I would consecrate myself to the sacred things of the soul.

Still, this time, the cries of my old vampirizers rose, more. They were ironic, whispering sarcasm at me, as if I were ridiculing myself: “You, old Custódio?! What are you going to do with Spiritism? It’s too late... Profession of faith, messages from another world...

What will they say about you, my old friend? Your best friends will talk about madness, senility... Make no mistake... Your own children will have you declared legally incompetent, as if you were mentally ill, unfit to manage any economic interests... You're too old for that..."

Saquarema gave me a meaningful look and concluded:
- My persecutors did not torment my body, nor did they disturb my mind. They only nurtured my complacency and, with that, prevented me from taking any renewing step. I return from Earth, my dear, imitating the indebted and empty-handed farmer who returns from a fertile field, where he could have amassed unimaginable treasures...

I know you still write for men, our brothers. Tell them about my poor experience, the peaceful, dangerous, masked obsession... Tell them something about the value of time, the potential greatness of any time in the human journey!

I embraced Saquarema, with hope turned towards new times, promising to attend to his request. And here I transcribe for you the personal teaching, which may serve many people, although I am certain that, if I were now reincarnated on Earth and received a similar lesson from someone, I might be very little inclined to take advantage of it.

7
COMMUNICATIONS

The story may seem trivial, but it is true.

Rafael Provenzano listened to the great commentators of the Gospel, feeling both resentful and unhappy. He was tormented by envy. He also wanted to speak to the masses, to move the crowd. Nothing shone as brightly in his eyes as the podium. And he waited anxiously for the day when he could reach that prominent spot in space, from where his voice could impress hundreds of ears.

Although fixated on such ambition, he was an employee at a simple shoe store. And his specialty was hammering nails into soles.
Often, he would surprise himself at work, imagining a huge audience and himself speaking, speaking to applause.

Perhaps that was why he was grumpy. There was a constant conflict between his vocation and his profession. His family and friends paid the price. His wife and four little daughters at home suffered his stubbornness and despair. Irritable over trifles, he was classified as a domestic tyrant.

He carefully cultivated the habit of shaking and hurting. The tension was not limited to his inner circle. All his relatives endured moral beatings. Among friends, he was feared as an impertinent critic. Despite all this, Rafael's passion was to solemnly preach Christian truth in Spiritist temples.

One night, while Martinho, the spiritual advisor of the mediumistic meeting he was attending, was speaking, Rafael consulted the communicator about his old intentions.

“Yes, my son,” commented the benefactor through the medium. “You will be able to teach from the podium later on. Now, however, it is too early. It is advisable to study, prepare yourself, learn to serve...

He went on to explain that the soldering bench was also a holy place. He could demonstrate faith and selflessness by example, edify, inspire, help...

Provenzano listened patiently, but left disappointed.
After a few weeks, the group gathered for their meeting in a suitable room. Pleasant conversation. One hour to go before the prayers began.

Rafael arrived, cheerful. He said he wanted to share with his dear friend Martinho the study of a beautiful dream and told those around him that, the night before, he had seen himself spiritually, outside his physical body.

He had felt himself floating, light as a feather in the wind. And he had contemplated in the heavens a sign with six letters, “B.P.B.G.F.,” in a radiant projection.

He had taken note of everything upon awakening. Mrs. Emilia, who believed dreams to be a constant vehicle for great teachings, asked him about the conclusion he had reached.

Don't you understand?

Rafael explained to the interested audience:
- According to my intuition, the letters mean: “Now you must preach without beating around the bush.”

He emphasized that, despite some sacrifice for his family, he was willing to try another job. He needed free time. If that resulted in hardship and trials, he said he was ready for whatever came his way. Finally, he declared that he was tired of tanning cowhide for shoes. He aspired to a different position.

At the appointed time, the small assembly devoted itself to the tasks that, on that night, were related to disobsession.

Preparatory activities. Prayers. And the busy assistance to the ailing entities began.

Martinho occupied the enlightening medium, who, from time to time, guided the services and gave ideas. Rafael asked for a turn to talk. The instructor, however, recommended that he wait.

It was necessary to attend to more urgent obligations. They would understand each other at the end of the session. Indeed, at the end of the activities, Martinho invited him to speak. Somewhat timidly,

Provenzano narrated the dream, referred to the luminous letters he had discovered in the firmament, as if shining especially for him, and reaffirmed his old desires. He wanted to be a great lecturer and promised to dedicate himself, body and soul, to the public teachings of the Gospel.

Sooth, the spiritual guide, asked about the meaning he, as the interested party, had given to the letters.

Rafael repeated, undaunted: “Now you must preach without this work.

The spiritual benefactor, however, made an expression of complacency on the medium's face and observed:

Indeed, Rafael, you were outside your physical body and did, in fact, see the message from the spiritual plane... But you are mistaken about what you think you read. The letters simply mean: **“*Before preaching, be good first.*”**

8

SPIRITISM AND DISSEMINATION

The excellent lawyer Joaquim Mota, a Spiritist since his early youth, had his own ideas about religious thought. Extremely sensitive, he considered it a mistake to express any personal opinion on matters of faith. “Religion,” he used to say, “is a matter of conscience alone.”

He would close himself off. In the library open to friends, there were volumes bound in calico and gold, bringing together classic and modern writers in science and literature. However, he kept his Spiritist books isolated in an old chest of drawers in his spacious bedroom.

He did not do this out of malice, however. He was, in essence, a sincere and respectable man, albeit a Spiritist in his own way, without the slightest concern for militancy. He was a kind of pleasant island, surrounded by the currents of complacency.

He had fixed in his mind the view that no one should, under any circumstances, speak to others about the religious principles they embraced, and he went through life rejecting any suggestion that might lead him to change.

It was precisely this man that we had gone to comfort in the middle of the night.

Mota had recently lost the companionship of Licínio Fonseca, who had passed away. With him, Mota had shared twenty-six years of service in the legal profession. Both men matured in life and profession, particularly after the age of sixty. They were invariable partners in work and struggle.

Always together in legal matters, business, interests, vacations, and excursions.

Without his ideal colleague, Mota was overcome with terrible anguish. He locked himself in tears in his private room, longing to see his friend in spirit. He pleaded for this concession in hidden prayers, and we were there – a group of four collaborators – with

instructions to take him to his companion. Cautiously detached from his body, which had settled under the influence of sleep, although he did not perceive our direct support, Joaquim was transported to the presence of the friend whom death had snatched away.

In the recovery room of the large charitable institute in the Spirit World, Licínio wept with joy upon their reunion. Moved, we observed as their heartfelt dialogue unfolded following the enthusiastic greetings.

"Mota, my dear Mota," the disembodied one sobbed, his voice filled with emotion, "death is only a transition. Please, be careful, my friend. I lost so much time due to my spiritual ignorance. Remember, life continues."

- But I know that, my friend – added the visitor, intending to console him – from a very early age I came to know the immortality of the soul. The tomb is nothing more than the passage from one plane to another... Nobody dies, nobody...

- Ah! So, you know that man on Earth is a Spirit temporarily inhabiting a vessel made of flesh? That we are tenants of the body in this world? – asked Licínio, clearly terrified.

- Yes, I know...

- And have you been informed that when we are born among men, we bring to the cradle the debts of the past, with certain obligations to fulfill?

- Perfectly. While still very young, I accepted the teaching and logic of reincarnation...

- Mota!... Mota!... – Shouted the other, visibly agitated – can you already admit that our wives and children, relatives and friends, are almost always people who lived with us in other earthly existences? That we are often entangled with them, for the redemption of old debts?

- Yes, yes, my dear friend, not only do I believe it... I know that all of this is the undeniable truth...

- And do you believe in the connections between those who return here and those who remain? Have you realized that a person on Earth lives and breathes with incarnate people with obsession, among the so-called living and dead, bordering on madness and crime?!...

- Clearly, I know that...

The interlocutor grabbed his right hand and continued, astonished:
- Mota! Mota! Listen!... Are you sure that life here is a continuation of what we leave behind and do? Are you convinced that all the resources of the physical plane are loans from the Lord, so we may do all the good we can, and that no one, after death, can escape from themselves?

- Yes, yes...

At that moment, however, Licínio lost his temper. He scanned the room with suddenly wild eyes, instinctively took a step back, and shouted:

“Get out of here, you impostor, get out of here!”

The visitor, painfully surprised, tried to appease him:

“Licínio, my friend, what is this? Calm down, calm down... It's me, Joaquim Mota, your everyday companion...”

- Never! Deceiver, trickster!... If he knew the realities you confirm, he would never have left me in the torment of ignorance... My friend Joaquim Mota is like me, deceived in the shadows of the world... He was always my best brother!... He would never, ever allow me to end up here, immersed in darkness!...

Mota, in tears, tried to argue, but we intervened in order to restore balance, and to do so, it was necessary to remove him immediately. A few minutes later, the lawyer regained possession of his physical body.

There was no insecurity that would lead him to believe it was a dream or a nightmare. He was absolutely certain of the spiritual reunion.

Dazed, he rose in tears and, thirsty for fresh air to cool his burning brain, opened one of the windows of the high apartment that was his domestic nest.

Mota contemplated the compact houses, where, perhaps, at that hour, dozens of people were departing from the fleeting experience of the world to the higher experiences of the Greater Life, and at that very moment of dawn, he began to think differently about Spiritism and its dissemination.

9

FRIEND'S EXPLANATION

You believe we have lost the thread of inspiration, if we ever possessed it, and emphasize that, as disembodied spirits, we now resemble another person, unidentifiable and distant, not to say idiotic and childish.

Besides that, you declare that you miss the grace in our current chronicles, "insipid and vague," as if we had lost contact with the Earth and men, forgetting literature and infantilizing our thinking.

You would like us to dwell on the so-called exciting issues of the world, performing the "striptease" of this or that scandal on the stage of the press, with the aim of regenerating customs, as if we did not already know, and more than enough, the circus ring of human jest, where, unfortunately for us, we have already played the role of clown.

Further, you state that we have forgotten Mythology and the taste for quotations, accommodating ourselves "merely to the trivial style of those who rehearse moving phrases for the comfort of stevedores and washerwomen," as if washerwomen and stevedores were not people just like us.

It is common knowledge that we do not enjoy competence in the art of writing. If there is anything strange about your letter, it is the impression that we would currently be changed, which, in truth, is not the case.

I am the same uninspired journalist, without the illusion of serving caviar on the literary menu, when all I have to offer my friends is some poorly cooked stew.

In support of my words, one need only refer to the information provided by our colleague Eloy Pontes when he wrote his impressions in O Globo, a good thirty years ago.

This distinguished critic of our literary output, in delightful pages that were transferred from the newspaper to his first series of “Obra Alheia” (Other People's Work), assured us: "I have read one of Mr.…'s current chronicles and I have read them all. He is monotonous..."

And he adds in another passage of the aforementioned review, referring to us:

“He takes nothing from himself, and is not what is generally called an inspired writer. He is a patient one. The old biblical themes, the ancient elements of Eastern legends, and the familiar pretexts of symbols imposed by time form the architecture of the volume. Mr..... belongs to the number of those who write because they have read. We find no sign of personal emotion throughout these pages. The emotions here are those of reminiscence. Moreover, recapping the volumes that line the author's bibliography, we consider that his prose work is also made up of stitches, patches, and chiffons.”

We do not refer to the notes of our esteemed colleague with the intention of stirring up controversy, but to confirm, in all sincerity, that he was expressing himself in this way with good reason.

Frankly, my dear friend, what we produce today through a medium is as unoriginal now as it was before.

Whether carrying the heavy burden of physical life or wearing the lighter cloak of the spiritual plane, my brain is the same artisan's lamp with which I carve the precious wood of the vernacular with my penknife. And this, while so many engrave with the chisel of intelligence, inflamed by the sacred fire of inspiration.

Thus, do not blame the mediumistic antennas for my intellectual poverty. If we express ourselves, in the situation of anonymous scribes of truth, more and more unpretentiously, we believe that it is never too late to recognize that journalists or writers, however insignificant, as in my case, are called by life to write for others and not for themselves.

Reaching such an understanding of our position, it is imperative to note what we are doing with the magical powers of the alphabet. Writing, yes, but writing profitably, understanding that the pen is the instrument of the word, and the word builds and destroys, just as it demeans or sanctifies.

This is what, in good conscience, we feel obliged to explain to you.

As for our functioning in the realm of letters "so long after death," as you proclaim, we suppose this occurs as a charitable concession of Divine Mercy. I do not hide the joy of being able to work with words, although this, in essence, must also constitute a trial.

Be assured, however, that we now deeply aspire to deal with letters in the realm of the spirit with the caution of a farmer who strives to cultivate potatoes after much disillusionment with the plants used in the valorization of narcotics.

My dear friend, this is the subject matter we are currently endeavoring to acquire and implement. However, we are optimistic that you will surpass our efforts upon your arrival.

10

LESSON OF DARKNESS

In the valley of darkness, the legion of unhappy Spirits raved.

Quarrels, obscenities, insults, slander.

Assaults were planned; crimes were plotted.

The Benevolent Spirit entered the cave, calming and blessing.

Here, he embraced an unfortunate soul, separating him from the crowd so he could later be handed over to rescue teams; further on, he gently relieved the tormented minds of deranged entities with his magnetism.

The assistance service continued with difficulty when the furious instigator of cruelty, upon discovering him, suddenly calmed down and, imposing respectful serenity on the mob of madmen, acknowledged his noble condition.

He told his rebellious companions to settle down, leaving free passage to the one he recognized as a missionary of good.

“Do you know me?” asked the newcomer, between astonishment and gratitude.

“Yes,” said the rude contractor of the shadows, “I was sick on Earth, and you healed my body, which was disfigured by disease. I remember perfectly well how carefully you washed my wounds.”

Those around them joined in the conversation unexpectedly, and one of them, with a stern frown, pointed at the visitor and cried out to his friend:
-What else has this man done for you in the world that we should be forced to show him deference?

-He gave me shelter and clothing.

Another asked:
-What else?

- He supplied my house with bread and clothing, freeing me and

my family from nakedness and hunger.

Another one asked ironically:
-Nothing else?

-He often shared with me what he carried in his bag, giving me blessed money so that poverty would not overwhelm me.

After he finished, and a respectful silence settled in, the Benefactor Spirit, encouraged by what he heard, asked humbly:
-My brother, I only fulfilled the duty that brotherhood requires; still, if you show such generosity toward me through your gratitude and love—praise I feel I do not deserve—why do you let yourself fall into obsession and wrongdoings?

The person questioned seemed to be moved, shook his head sadly, and explained:
-In truth, you are good and you supported my life, but you did not teach me how to live!

*

Spiritists, brothers!

Let us cultivate the dissemination of the Renewing Doctrine that enlightens and unites us!

With the bread of the body, let us extend the light of the soul that enables us to learn and understand, reason and serve.

II

THE PATH TO THE KINGDOM

In the rough dwelling of Aaron, the tanner, Jesus said to Zacharias, the owner of extensive vineyards in Jericho:

The Kingdom of God will finally be the victory of good in the realm of men! The Sun will cover the world with a mantle of luminous joy, guarding triumphant peace. Children of all ethnic backgrounds will develop a bond through mutual aid.

Wars will have disappeared, pushed aside from memory, like nightmares that the day relegates to the beginning of the night!...

No one will remember to demand the superfluous, nor will they forget to provide their neighbor with the necessary.

A farmer's harvest will produce enough for the other who did not have the opportunity to sow, and a brother's roof will also rise as a refuge for the pilgrim thirsty for affection, without the idea of evil visiting their minds...

Widowhood and orphanhood will never again shed even a slight tear of suffering, for death will be nothing more than the antechamber of union in perpetual love that brightens eternity.

The sick, however helpless they may seem, will find a restful bed, and bodily ailments will cease to be monsters lurking in earthly dwellings, to become simply brief reminders of the natural laws governing all forms.

Work will not be a form of captivity, but rather a sacred privilege of intelligence. Happiness and power will not mark the place of those who hold gold and purple, but the hearts of those who strive most for the sweet contentment of understanding and serving.

The home will not become a crucible of trials, for it will shine incessantly as a nest of blessings, in whose embrace will throb the happy souls who meet to bless trust and unblemished tenderness.

Men will feel responsible for the common tranquility, in accordance

with a righteous conscience, transforming edifying action into a daily norm; women will be respected as mothers and companions, to whom we originally owe all the hopes and joys that blossom on Earth, and children will be considered deposits of God!

The pain of one will be shared, like a passing shadow among all, just as the joy of one will spread, on the path of all, recalling the beauty of starlight...

Envy and selfishness will no longer exist, since no one will desire for others what they do not desire for themselves!

Fountains will glide among gardens, and substantial fruits will hang along the roads, offering themselves to the traveler's hunger, asking nothing more than a prayer of gratitude for the Father's goodness.

All creatures will nurture within themselves the longing to build Heaven on Earth, which the all-merciful One has given them!

Jesus paused, contemplating the crowd that applauded Him frenetically, minutes after His entry into Jerusalem for the Passover celebrations, and, noticing that the Israelites differed from one another, revealing particularities of the diverse regions from which they came, He emphasized:

- When we collectively reach the Kingdom of Heaven, no one will be born under any sign of separation or discord, because Humanity will be governed by the ideals and interests of one world only!

Enraptured, Zechariah gazed at him with anxious expectation and pondered respectfully:
- Lord, I came from Jericho to worship the traditions of our ancestors; however, above all, I longed to find You and hear You... I have grown old, plowing the field and dreaming of peace!... I have lived according to the principles of Moses; however, from the depths of my soul, I want to reach the Kingdom of God of which you are the messenger in these new times!... Master! Master!... To seek you, I have traveled the path of my estate to here, step by step... From village to village, from house to house, a path exists, clear, determined...
But what is, Lord, the Way to the Kingdom of God?
- The road to the Kingdom of God is a long climb... – Jesus began, explaining.

But then, lines of demonstrators entered the room, interrupting His speech and taking Him to the adjacent square, covered in flowers.

*

Zechariah, in ecstasy, went to his relatives' place in the Valley of Hinnom, lingering there for two days in enthusiastic commentary about the promises and teachings of Christ. However, upon returning to the city, he was met with a scene of a frenzied and aggressive crowd...

No more glorification, no more celebration. Before the gathering, the Master, in person, was no longer loved. Those same people who had honored Him with songs of praise now jeered at Him with refined insults.

The old man of Jericho, translucent with astonishment, saw that the Beloved Friend, staggering and sweating, dragging the cross of the evildoers... He longed to embrace him and crept in, with difficulty, enduring pushes and jeers from the crowd...

Close to the wood, he noticed that a group of weeping women was forcing the Master to stop unexpectedly, and, preceding them to speak, he knelt before Him and cried out:
- Lord!... Lord!...

Jesus withdrew His wounded right hand from the wood, stroked his hair for a moment, which time had whitened, resembling flax when the flake rests beside the distaff, and spoke humbly:
- Yes, Zechariah, those who wish to reach the Kingdom of God will climb a steep slope...

Then, He noted the attention of those listening to the insults directed at Him...

After a brief pause, He pointed with a gesture to the dust and stones that jutted out ahead, and, as if reminding him of the question He had left unanswered, He stated in a firm voice:

- This is the way to conquer the Kingdom of God...

12

TRAINING FOR DEATH

Concerned with survival beyond the grave, you ask, astonished, how should one be trained for the surprises of death.

The question is intriguing and prompts pause for thought. Believe, however, that for now, it is not very easy to technically prepare a companion for the inevitable pilgrimage.

Tourists from Asia or Europe efficiently prepare future travelers, as they do not lack the necessary analogical terms. But we, the discarnate, encounter almost insurmountable obstacles.

Strictly speaking, Religion should guide the achievements of the spirit, just as Science directs all subjects pertaining to material life. However, Religion, to a certain extent, remains bound to the superficiality of the priesthood, without touching the depths of the soul.

It is also important to consider that your inquiry, instead of being directed to the great theologians of Earth, now residing in Spirituality, was addressed precisely to me, a poor reporter without the merits to deal with such an inquiry.

You can believe that despite finding myself here again, almost twenty years later, I still feel the astonishment of a Xavante Indian, suddenly brought from the jungles of Mato Grosso to one of our universities, with the obligation to suddenly join the most elevated studies and the most complicated disciplines.

For this reason, I can only refer to my own point of view, with the shortcomings of a savage surprised by the crown of civilization.

First, I must refer to our old bad habits. Their crystallization here is a tyrannical plague.

Begin the renewal of your customs with your daily meals. Gradually reduce the urge to eat animal meat. The cemetery in the belly is a torment after the great transition. Pork loin or veal steak, seasoned with salt and pepper, do not place us very far from our

ancestors, the Tamoios and the Caiapós, who devoured each other.

The widely consumed stimulants constitute another dangerous obsession. I have seen many souls of seemingly exquisite origin, willing to exchange Heaven itself for aristocratic whiskey or our Brazilian cachaça.

As much as possible, avoid smoking. It causes distress to discarnate nicotine lovers.

Do not give in to the temptation of narcotics. No matter how distressing the crises of the physical stage may seem, hold fast to the blows of the struggle. The victims of cocaine, morphine, and barbiturates linger for a long time in the dark cell of thirst and inertia.

And sex? Take great care in preserving your emotional balance. We have many good people here carrying with them the hell labeled "love."

If you have some money or earthly possessions, do not delay making donations if you are truly inclined to do so. Great men, whom we admired in the world for their skill and power in conducting important business, appear before us on many occasions like children desperate because they can no longer write checks.

Use caution when dealing with wills in family matters. Sudden illnesses strike without warning, and if your paperwork is not in order, you will suffer many humiliations in courts and notary offices.

Above all, do not become too attached to blood ties. Love your spouse, children, and relatives in moderation, knowing that one day you will be gone and that, for this very reason, they will almost always act contrary to your wishes, even though they respect your memory.

Do not forget that, in the present state of earthly education, if some loved ones register your extraterrestrial presence after the funeral, they will certainly summon you to descend into hell, fearing your untimely return.

If you already possess the treasure of religious faith, live according to the precepts you embrace. The moral responsibility of those who

already know the way, without balancing themselves within it, is terrible.

Do all the good you can, without worrying about pleasing everyone. Convince yourself that if you don't feel sympathy for certain people, there are many who tolerate you with great effort.

For this reason, in any circumstance, keep your noble smile. Always work, work without ceasing. Service is the best solvent of our sorrows.

Help yourself by faithfully carrying out your responsibilities.

As for the rest, don't tire yourself out or inquire excessively, because, sooner or later, death will offer you its calling card, revealing to you everything that, for now, I cannot tell you.

13
HELP FROM THE LORD

At the meeting dedicated to evangelical studies, the parable of the Good Samaritan was the main topic.

However, the companions had various questions about mediumistic development. Some were new to psychic experiences, unaware of which area of work required more extensive focus, while others complained about the time spent in this or that sector without practical results.

Once the atmosphere had calmed down, filled with questions, Brother Calimério, a discarnate friend who was extremely fond of the circle, controlled the psychophonic faculties of Mrs. Amanda, a veteran medium of the house, and greeted those present, ready to talk.

The questions came suddenly: "Brother Calimério, what will it take to deserve greater coverage from the Higher Spirituality in mediumistic tasks?"

- How to secure sponsorship in clairvoyance?

- Brother, I know we must always study if we want to discern; however, what will be the process of gaining the assistance of competent mentors in the field of intuition?

- And in healing mediumship?

- Calimério, how to receive the protection of the Missionaries of Good, who will free us from the influence of evil?

- Brother, I have been experimenting with physical effects for a long time, without appreciable results... What should I do to gain more decisive support from Above?

The communicator, in an unassuming tone, spoke without affectation:
- My friends, I am very far from the position of a guide; however, I earnestly beg Our Lord Jesus Christ, if I may use tonight's parable to clarify the matter.

And, before his attentive companions, he expressed himself with humility:
- As I learned, the man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, in the episode of the Good Samaritan, when he fell into the hands of robbers, who left him half-dead, appealed, in silent prayer, to the goodness of God.

Moved with compassion, the All-merciful One promptly sent a messenger, who naturally needed a human instrument in order to express himself. The representative of Providence stood beside the victim, anxiously awaiting the arrival of someone willing to collaborate with him in the pious task.

Precisely, a priest of great knowledge of the Scriptures, educated in the principles of love for God above all things and for one's neighbor as oneself, was the first to approach... The one in charge of the blessing tried to induce him to benevolence; however, the holder of the Faith, fearing obstacles, quickened his pace and went on ahead.

Soon after, a Levite, equally learned, appeared at the site, and the benefactor from on High begged him for cooperation, in vain, because the guardian of the Law, fearing to complicate things, refused to consider the mental request, quickly withdrawing.

Still, an unknown Samaritan, traveling without any label to honor his presence, as he passed by, felt in his heart the plea that the Divine Emissary addressed to him and, letting himself be overcome by sudden compassion, went to him to provide immediate assistance.

He cleaned the unfortunate man, stopped the bleeding from his wounds, and soon after, placing him on his horse, took him to an inn and cared for him.

The next day, he disbursed the necessary money, paid for his lodging, and, before leaving, spontaneously took responsibility for all expenses that might be incurred in the required treatment, efficiently meeting the expectations of the messenger who had come to practice beneficence in the name of God...

Calimério paused calmly and asked:
-Which of the three seems to you the worthiest of attention in the

Spiritual Plane?

Antônio Pires, the most mature of the meeting, with the air of a student who had already reached the objective of the teaching, replied for all:
- Certainly, it is the Samaritan, obedient to the invitation of charity.

The communicator smiled gently and concluded:
- Then, my friends, let us do the same.

14
BELARMINO BICAS

After the charity party, where we had served as waiters, Belarmino Bicas, a dear companion whom we had grown fond of in the Spiritual Plane, took me aside and spoke decisively:
“Well, since we were engaged in a task of solidarity today, I would like to ask you a favor...” he said, his tone both hopeful and a bit hesitant, as if unsure of my response.

Before my surprise, Belarmino continued:
"I understand that you still have some ability to write to companions incarnated on Earth, and I would like to entrust you with a matter..."

- What matters?”

- It so happens that I passed away at fifty-eight years of age, after twenty years of spiritist conviction. I embraced the principles codified by Allan Kardec at thirty-eight, and, as I had always been irascible by temperament, I organized, from my first contacts with the Consoling Doctrine, a daily record of all my exasperations, pointing out their causes for later study...

My missteps, however, were so many that, despite the noble knowledge assimilated, I unconsciously suppressed twenty-two years of the eighty that I was entitled to enjoy in the physical body.

Thus, I returned to the Spiritual Homeland in the condition of an indirect suicide... Only here could I examine my problems and come to terms with the disappointments... How many treasures lost for trifles! How much nonsense in the name of feeling!

And, displaying a curious piece of paper, Belarmino added:
- Tell my story to those who are still carrying the nonsense of bitterness! Speak about the danger of systematic anger, insist on the need for tolerance, patience, serenity, and forgiveness!

Beg our companions not to waste the richness of hours with susceptibilities and sulks; explain to the people on Earth that bad humor also kills! It was then that I moved on to reading the interesting statistics of irritations, which I do not hesitate to transcribe:

Belarmino Bicas – Number of unnecessary angers and grievances with the specification of the respective causes, from 1936 to 1956:

1811 - Due to family disagreements;

0906 - Due to disagreements at home regarding food and hygiene;

1614 - Due to arguments with his wife over domestic and social conduct;

1801 - Due to disagreements with his children, sons-in-law, and daughter-in-law;

1,015 - Due to conflicts with bosses.

1,333 - Due to incompatibility with colleagues;

1,012 - Due to complaints to suppliers and logisticians in minor cases.

0614 - Due to misunderstandings with neighbors;

0315 - Due to resentment toward close friends;

1089 - Due to sensitivity to the neglect of employees and staff at various institutions;

0615 - Due to annoyances with barbers and tailors;

0777 - Due to disagreements with unknown drivers and passengers while traveling by bus, private car, tram, or shared taxi;

0419 - Due to disagreements with milkmen and bakers;

0820 - For quarreling with waiters in restaurants and cafes;

0211 - For taking offense at difficulties with telephone services;

0090 - For disputes in places of entertainment;

0815 - For getting upset with other people's opinions on religious matters;

0217- For misunderstandings with fellow believers at the Spiritist temple;

0901 - For deception or anxiety in the presence of imaginary people or the prospect of unpleasant events that never happened.

Total: 16,386 useless exasperations.

This is a summary of the irritations of our helpful friend Bicas: 16,386 unnecessary annoyances in 7,300 days of existence, and this during the four most beautiful decades of his life, as they were illuminated by the light of the Revived Gospel.

I fulfill his wish to make his experience known, which, in our view, is as important as the observations that prevent imbalances and illnesses, although we are certain that many people will judge Belarmino's assessment as mere invention by a mischievous Spirit.

15

SPIRITIST AWARENESS

You say you do not understand the reason for so much self-censorship in the communications of disincarnate spiritists.

So-and-so, who left the best service record, writes again, declaring that he did not act among men as he should have; such-and-such, known for his high standard of virtues, returns, through various mediums, to lament the lost time...

And you emphasize, after interesting notes: "One gets the impression that our brothers return from the Beyond tormented by terrible guilt complexes. How can this phenomenon be explained?"

Believe me, my dear friend, I personally hold the most tender admiration for Spiritists.

Tireless builders of progress, workers of the Revived Christianity.

However, they have received so much freedom in interpreting the teachings of Jesus that, honestly, I do not know of any people of faith in this world more gifted in reasoning about life and Universe problems.

Carrying vast amounts of knowledge, it is right that they should be concerned with doing much more, and always more, for the benefit of so many brothers and sisters on Earth, held back by illusions and inhibitions in the realm of belief.

It is said that Allan Kardec, when gathering the texts that would become “The Spirits' Book,” went to bed one night, impressed by a dream of Luther's that he had heard about.

The great reformer, in his time, cherished the conviction that he had been in paradise, gathering information about heavenly happiness.

Moved, the codifier of the Spiritist Doctrine, during his rest, also found himself outside his body, in a singular journey... Beside him, he identified an envoy from the Sublime Planes who transported him suddenly to the misty region, where thousands of entities

groaned in appalling suffering. Sobs of distress mingled with cries of anger, blasphemies followed by laughter of madness.

Astonished, Kardec remembered the tyrants of history and asked, amazed:

- Do the crucifiers of Jesus lie here?

- None of them, replied the helpful guide. Although responsible, in essence, they were unaware of the evil they were doing. The Master Himself helped them to free themselves from remorse, obtaining blessed reincarnations for them, in which they redeemed themselves before the Law.

- And what about the Roman emperors? Surely, they will suffer in these places the same torments they imposed on humanity...

- Not at all. Men of the caliber of Tiberius or Caligula had not the slightest notion of spirituality. Some of them, after regenerative stages on Earth, have already risen to higher spheres, while others remain, to this day, confined to the physical realm, on the verge of remission.

“Are the executioners of Christians in the early centuries of the Gospel imprisoned in these dark valleys?” asked the visitor. “Not at all,” replied the lucid companion, "the executioners of Jesus' followers in apostolic times were almost savage men and women, despite the trappings of civilization they displayed... They were all sent to reincarnation to acquire education and understanding."

The codifier of Spiritism thought of the Antiquity’s conquerors, like Attila, Hannibal, Alaric, Genghis Khan ... Before, however, he could formulate a new question, the messenger added, answering his mental query:

- The warriors you remember do not wander here... They knew nothing of the spiritual realities and, therefore, received pious support, directed towards carnal rebirth, entering into expiatory struggles, according to the debts incurred...

"Then tell me," Kardec pleaded, emotionally, "who are these sufferers, whose groans and curses pierce my soul?"

And the advisor explained, imperturbably:

- We have among us those who were fully educated in the world about the imperatives of Goodness and Truth, and who deliberately fled from Truth and Goodness.

Especially unfaithful Christians of all ages, who were perfectly knowledgeable about the lessons and example of Christ and who gave themselves over to evil of their own free will... For them, a new cradle on Earth is always more difficult...

Shocked by the unexpected observation, Kardec returned to his body and immediately got up and wrote down the question he would present the following night for examination by the mentors of the work in progress, which appears as Question No. 642 in "The Spirits' Book":
"To please God and ensure his future position, is it enough for man not to practice evil?"

The instructors replied:
"No; he must do good to the best of his ability, for he will be held accountable for all the evil that has resulted from not having practiced good."

As is easy to see, my friend, with such clear and logical principles, it is natural that the Spiritist consciousness, when confronted with the dominant ideas in the majority of religions, is very different.